



SHAPIRO SGE

GLICKENHAUS

ENTERTAINMENT

SHAPIRO GLICKENHAUS ENTERTAINMENT
Presents

AN IEVINS / HENENLOTTER PRODUCTION

"BASKET CASE 2"

Starring
KEVIN VAN HENTENRYCK
ANNIE ROSS
KATHRYN MEISLE

Executive in Charge of Production
FRANK K. ISAAC

Special Effects Make-Up
GABE BARTALOS

Edited by
KEVIN TENT

Director of Photography
ROBERT M. BALDWIN

Music
JOE RENZETTI

Executive Producer
JAMES GLICKENHAUS

Produced by
EDGAR IEVINS

Written and Directed by
FRANK HENENLOTTER

SYNOPSIS

(Not for Publication)

Surviving a near-fatal fall from atop a run down Times Square apartment building, strange, introverted Duane Bradley (Kevin van Hentenryck) and his hideously deformed, Siamese twin brother, Belial, are taken under the wing of a kindly spinster doctor known to her charges as "Granny Ruth" (Annie Ross). Soon they become part of the family of "special individuals" that Granny Ruth and her granddaughter Susan (Heather Rattray) have established in their isolated home.

As time passes, Duane begins to feel restless in the freak community, and a warm relationship develops between Duane and Susan. Belial, meanwhile, finds his female counterpart in the malformed Eve. Encouraged by his brother's reception among his peers, Duane moves toward a final separation from his telepathic twin. Outside forces, however, only bring them irrevocably -- and, ultimately, inseparably -- together.

When a lurid tabloid offers a million dollar reward for information leading to the capture of the so-called "Times Square Twins," reporter Marcie Elliott (Kathryn Meisle) tracks Duane and Belial to Granny Ruth's, threatening the entire community with exposure. Despite his desire to enter the "normal" world, Duane pledges to stand alongside Belial to defend the freaks' privacy -- with a vengeance.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Belial is back -- and this time, he's brought along some friends. This sequel to writer-director Frank Henenlotter's 1982 cult classic "Basket Case" continues the story of "Times Square Twins" Duane Bradley and his hideously deformed brother, introducing them to a family of "special individuals" whose nightmarish revenge on a snooping tabloid reporter makes for what may be Henenlotter's most darkly disturbing descent into madness and the nature of the so-called "abnormal."

"The last film I ever intended to make," laughs Henenlotter, candidly admitting he resisted the idea of a sequel for over six years. "There was very little to follow through with," adds producer Edgar Ievins, a longtime Henenlotter associate. "The element of surprise was gone: people already knew what was in the basket. Frank was absolutely firm in the resolution that the picture would have to stand on its own."

Eventually, says Henenlotter, the story for "BC2" just "dropped into my head." Written in record time, the project was, along with the horror comedy "Frankenhooker," one of a pair of films snagged for production by fellow New York street filmmaker James Glickenhaus ("The Exterminator," "Shakedown,") for Shapiro Glickenhaus Entertainment. The two films were shot back-to-back over a twelve-week period, excluding extensive preproduction.

"SGE offered me something that previous companies didn't," explains Henenlotter. "Creative control and a budget of more than fourteen cents." Where the original "Basket Case" was made for a

paltry \$35,000, "the scope of 'BC2' is more ambitious," says producer Ievins, "and we think the polished look will help bring the film to a wider, crossover audience."

Ievins attributes that polish to the crack team of production veterans assembled for the two films, including director of photography Robert M. Baldwin, Glickenhau's cameraman on "The Exterminator" and "The Soldier"; editor Kevin Tent, responsible for the camp classic "Not of This Earth," starring Traci Lords, and the upcoming "Back to Hollywood Boulevard"; and composer Joe Renzetti, an Oscar-winner for "The Buddy Holly Story."

Marking an additional first for the Henenlotter/Ievins team was the film's extensive use of non-New York locations and studio-level set design. Scenes in and around Granny Ruth's home were filmed on an actual estate in Plainfield, N.J., and a team of established set designers worked overtime to dress both the actual and the on-set interiors, making both for seamless matches and a gloss unusual for the genre.

"There's nothing like locations to give you that wide-screen look," says Ievins, who credits cinematographer Baldwin for much of the film's rich texture. "Bob understands low-budget thinking, but he'll fight for production value." Recalling the days on "BC1" when cast and crew worked night jobs to earn a living, the producer admits "for once it was nice to have a real budget and a reasonably sane schedule."

The picture's less-restrictive resources likewise enabled the filmmakers to call upon a wider range of talent than in the past. "The level of people you get with a bigger production helps you to

communicate the story more clearly," Ievins says. "There's a good reason these people make it into the Screen Actor's Guild: they're better." Henenlotter and Ievins drew their cast not only from the ranks of the untried, but also and a pool of seasoned professionals, all cast against type.

Chief among the newcomers is Kathryn Meisle, familiar to daytime television audiences from her recurring roles on "One Life to Live" and "Loving," who makes an impressive feature-film debut as bargain-basement journalist Marcie Elliott. "Kathryn confuses the notion that her character is evil," compliments Ievins. Agrees the actress, "I tried to make her a woman with a purpose, not a hateful person, just somebody doing her job."

Heading the supporting cast are jazz singing great Annie Ross as Granny Ruth and "From Beyond's" evil Dr. Praetorius, Ted Sorel, here playing a down-on-his-heels private detective. Cast when he accompanied Ross on a set visit and was immediately recognized by the film's special effects crew, Sorel relished the opportunity to play a Chanderlesque gumshoe.

"I don't get these parts," says Sorel, the nephew of famed Universal monster make-up man Jack Pierce. "I have what the business calls an 'upscale' look." Sorel not only realized a a lifelong ambition to play a detective in "BC2," but "I even get to have a barroom brawl -- a mano-a-mano with Belial in a monster-on-man scene unique in horror-film annals.

"Usually, working with a monster is like having a pillow attached to your chest," observes Sorel of the usual technique for shooting attack sequences, which involves the use of a special

harness. "I said, 'Just give me a dummy that's not attached to anything, let me move around with it for a master.'" Despite some initial resistance, Sorel eventually convinced Henenlotter to give it a try, to amazing results.

"I really wrestled with the thing," insists Sorel. The creature was attached to the actor's wrist, with no technicians in sight. Laughs actress Meisle, "I saw myself getting jealous when Ted gets killed. For my scene, it was back in the harness. I had cables running between my legs so Belial could hit me -- and he slapped me in the face numerous times." (Fortunately, however, Meisle survived her ordeal unscathed.)

Belial, of course, remains the true star of the film. Make-up whiz Gabe Bartalos, who helped create the monster for the original "Basket Case," improved on his original designs for the sequel using a variety of Belial apparatuses with different articulation. "We had a 'walking Belial,' even a 'hero Belial,'" Bartalos explains, the latter requiring some thirty feet of cable and eight technicians to operate.

An effects magician "whose resume exceeds his chronological age," jokes Ievins, with a list of credits that includes not only scare flicks but also the Oscar-nominated "Gorillas in the Mist," starring Sigourney Weaver, Bartalos attracted a veritable brain trust of an effects crew to the project, notably mechanical articulation chief Ken Walker, who came to "BC2" straight off a stint on "Star Trek V."

The team's collective imagination was stretched to its deranged limits for the realization of Granny Ruth's family of "special individuals," which include a mouse man, a gargoyle, a four foot wide disembodied head that sings opera. Born out of late-night discussions between Bartalos and Henenlotter, the so-called "freaks" are noteworthy not only for their amazing prosthetics, but also their unusually well-developed characters.

"Studio pictures can give their monsters more extensive articulation, but they invariably fail to give them personality," says Ievins. "That really comes from the effects crew, when they understand and care enough and are given sufficient freedom to express themselves." Clearly, says Bartalos, the freaks have been a labor of love -- and their strangely engaging presence exerted a potent effect on the film's "normal" players.

"I would stare at the freaks while waiting for a shot and think, 'poor things,'" says Meisle. Not surprisingly, one actor who treated the monsters like a brother was Kevin van Hentenryck, reprising his role from "BC1" as Duane Bradley. "Kevin was very protective of Belial off-screen," Meisle remembers. "He was always standing up for him. In our scenes together, he'd always warn me, 'Don't hurt him -- or kiss him.'"

It is just this sort of identification with the unnatural that Henenlotter's films encourage, a quality that, according to producer Ievins, makes them "dangerous." "Whatever the subject matter," Ievins notes, "the treatment is always relentless and disturbing. The story always goes in a different direction than you expect.

There's no false sense of security. Frank's films really challenge an audience."

For his part, Henenlotter prefers to consider himself a simple storyteller. But "Basket Case 2," like other Henenlotter stories, is more than just another "supernatural buddy film." As Ievins puts it, "playing it safe gives you a real false sense of security. Being a little different is the safest commercial bet." And, for all its characteristically twisted qualities, being a little "different" is just what "Basket Case 2" is all about.

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION TEAM

"America's most dangerous filmmaker." That's what Toxic Horror magazine calls writer/director FRANK HENENLOTTER. "Only David Cronenberg," the magazine goes on, "has been as uncompromising, or as doggedly determined to expand the genre to accomodate a personal vision." Concurs Henenlotter's partner, producer Edgar Ievins, "Frank's films are dangerous. They really challenge an audience."

Henenlotter shuns the idea of deep meanings in his films, regarding himself simply as a storyteller. Still, the stories he tells -- be they about a deformed half-Siamese twin in a basket, or all-talking, all-singing, even all-dancing parasite given to devouring people's brains -- seem almost guaranteed to generate nightmares. Early on, their disturbing imagery won Henenlotter recognition from mainstream film critics, who rank his work on an equal level with that of Cronenberg or George Romero.

A filmmaker from age 14, Henenlotter achieved his own special notoriety in the horror genre with his first effort, "Basket Case," made in association with producer Edgar Ievins on an obscene \$35,000 budget. The twisted tale of a disturbed young man and his deformed brother became the underground sensation at the 1983 Cannes Film Festival and has since achieved healthy cult status.

Henenlotter followed "Basket Case" with the even more outrageous "Brain Damage," which the filmmaker jokingly describes as "the story of a boy and his pet brain-sucking parasite." Like its predecessor, the film was a solid cult success. SGE's "Basket Case 2," a sequel to his seminal effort, and "Frankenhooker," a

characteristically askew comedic retelling of the Mary Shelley classic, represent his most ambitious and elaborate efforts to date.

Born and raised in Long Island, New York, Henenlotter saw his first horror movie, "Valley of the Zombies," at age seven, and was instantly hooked. Perhaps his fondest childhood memory is that of seeing William Castle's "The Tingler" at age nine in a seat specially rigged to deliver a mild electric shock at appropriate moments. No need to attend film school. Henenlotter learned his craft through example: "13 Ghosts," "Psycho," and his all-time favorite, "Circus of Horrors."

His first film in 16mm, "Slash of the Knife," almost played as a short subject with John Waters' infamous "Pink Flamingoes." But the deal was cancelled when "Slash" was deemed "too offensive," prompting Henenlotter to wonder how any film could be too offensive to be teamed with "Pink Flamingoes." The film's production did, however, result in a lasting partnership with Ievins, a former psychological therapy consultant interested in the administrative side of filmmaking.

A knowledgeable film historian, Henenlotter lives in an East Village apartment in New York city decorated with his favorite horror film movie posters and housing a considerable collection of film memorabilia and surgical tools. "I don't want to make movies to pay the rent," says Henenlotter. "And I don't intend to work on movies for other people. Whatever I do, good or bad, will be my own."

Producer EDGAR IEVINS cites his years of working in a mental health center as "the best possible training for making features."

Schooled in public administration, the New York-born Ievins served as personal and group therapy consultant to the Skidmore College School of Social Work in Glen Falls and later became clinical director of human resource program adolescent outpatient counselling at the city's Warren-Washington Counties Mental Health Center -- a location to which he was to return years later as producer of "Basket Case."

Having reached a stage in his career "where I could continue indefinitely in the same position, go back to school for my doctorate, or look around for something in the private sector," Ievins met writer-director Frank Henenlotter through a girlfriend working on Henenlotter's "Slash of the Knife." "It was very clear even then he was going to be famous," remembers Ievins. "He knew everything there was to know about film. His home movies were all the work of the same little madman."

Well-versed in fiscal necessities from his days in public administration, Ievins raised the \$35,000 it took to film "Basket Case," enticing investors through set visits and dailies. The film took six months to shoot, with cast and crew working night jobs to earn a living and shooting on weekends -- an experience that helps Ievins appreciate the present production luxuries. "It's nice to have a real budget and a sane schedule," he jokes.

Early on, the Ievins-Henenlotter partnership developed a clear division of responsibilities, with Henenlotter gladly handing over the business reins to Ievins. The producer describes their

relationship as "a perfect marriage. My responsibility is to create a set environment where Frank can make his films. As long as I put together the proper ingredients, I know I'll get a terrific film."

An avowed Frank Henenlotter fan, executive producer JAMES GLICKENHAUS is also a noted filmmaker in his own right, having written and directed "The Exterminator," "The Soldier," "The Protector," and "Blue Jean Cop" (released in the U.S. by Universal as "Shakedown"), which marked the inaugural in-house production of Shapiro Glickenhause Entertainment, formed in October, 1987, as the result of a merger between Glickenhause' New York-based production company and the former Shapiro Entertainment Corp.

A native New Yorker whose own films reflect a predilection for the grittier sides of the Big Apple, Glickenhause studied film, sculpture and history at the University of California at Santa Barbara and at Antioch College. A limited partner in Glickenhause and Co., a member firm of the New York Stock Exchange, he is an honorary professor of film at Trinity University. Glickenhause is chairman of SGE.

As the man responsible for some of the screen's nastiest-ever monsters, make-up wizard GABE BARTALOS ranks as an expert in a field increasingly dominated by cheap amateurs. His extensive credit list includes not only work on scare flicks for Frank Henenlotter and other horror mavens, but also such prestigious efforts as Warner Bros.' Oscar-nominated "Gorillas in the Mist," starring Sigourney Weaver.

An apprentice of established effects artist Arnold Gargiolo, Bartalos teamed up with three other monster-makers for "Spookies," which earned an award for Best Special Effects at the Cannes Film Festival. The work that followed brought the New York-based Bartalos to Southern California, where he supervised the transformation and attack scenes for Empire's "The Doll."

Bartalos entered the horror film mainstream with work on "Friday the 13th, Part VI" and "Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2," partnered on the latter with effects legend Tom Savini. It was "Chainsaw 2" that first brought Bartalos to the attention of filmmaking partners Frank Henenlotter and Edgar Ievins, who hired him on immediately for "Basket Case" -- and Belial was born.

Following a stint on "Fright Night, Part 2," Bartalos retruned to New York to work with Henenlotter and Ievins on "Brain Damage," creating the memorable all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing brain-sucking parasite, "Elmer." His monsters for "Frankenhooker" and "Basket Case 2," born out of late-night sessions with Henenlotter, rate as some of his most unsettling to date.

Rarely idle these days, Bartalos lives and operates his own studio in North Hollywood.

Cinematographer ROBERT M. BALDWIN is a thirty year veteran of the motion picture industry, with some fifty or more film and television credits. A longtime associate of executive producer James Glickenhaus, for whom he shot "The Exterminator" and "The Soldier," Baldwin is a specialist in the action and horror genres and knows how to get a high-sheen look from even the most meagre budgets.

"He'll fight for production value," says producer Edgar Ievins, who credits Baldwin with the film's quality look.

In addition to his Glickenhause films, Baldwin lensed Robert Ginty's directorial debut, "Bounty Hunter," and its followup, "Vietnam, Texas." His extensive list of TV credits include "The Gambler," starring Kenny Rogers, the seven-hour Richard Chamberlain miniseries "Dream West," Garry ("Doonesbury") Trudeau's "Rapmaster Ronnie," the Hank Williams biopic "Living Proof," with Richard Thomas, and the abortion-themed "Choices," starring George C. Scott and Jacqueline Bisset.

Making a successful leap from trailer cutting to features, KEVIN TENT first applied the scissors to Traci Lords in the Jim Wynorski remake of Roger Corman's "Not of This Earth." His subsequent feature credits include "Back to Hollywood Boulevard," a sequel to the Joe Dante classic "Hollywood Boulevard," and SGE's science-fiction adventure "Moontrap," starring Walter Koenig and Bruce Campbell.

Tent served his editing apprenticeship as in-house cutter for industrial film specialists Alfred Higgins Productions, eventually becoming a free-lance trailer maker for SGE and other independent companies. His work for SGE in that field includes teasers and promos for "Black Roses," "The Darkside," "Circleman," "The Brain" and "The Lost Idol."

Winner of a Best Adaptation Score Oscar for "The Buddy Holly Story," composer JOE RENZETTI began his career as an arranger for such artists as Neil Diamond, Roy Orbison, Engelbert Humperdink and Dusty Springfield. For "The Buddy Holly Story," Renzetti had the unenviable task of arranging Holly's songs and teaching actors Gary Busey, Charles Martin Smith and Don Stroud how to perform them. The music was recorded live during filming and spawned a hit soundtrack.

Following his Academy Award for the Steve Rash-directed biopic, Renzetti served as a story consultant and provided the arrangements for Taylor Hackford's rock-and-roll-themed "The Idolmaker." Extraordinarily versatile, Renzetti has written the music for films as disparate as "Fatso," "The Exterminator," "Dead and Buried," "Under the Rainbow," "Vice Squad," "Wanted: Dead or Alive," "Poltergeist III" and "Child's Play."

For television, Renzetti scored John Carpenter's docudrama "Elvis," starring Kurt Russell, Ron Howard's "Cotton Candy," "Chiselm," "Marathon," "The Mysterious Two" and "Rich Hall's Vanishing America," which reunited Renzetti with "Holly" director Steve Rash. Most recently, Renzetti provided the music for the "Lover Come Back" episode of HBO's "Tales From the Crypt."

ABOUT THE CAST

A certified jazz legend on both sides of the Atlantic, renowned for her smoky vocals, ANNIE ROSS has dubbed Lilli Palmer, Ursula Andress, Britt Ekland, Sharon Tate and Simone Signoret. She voiced Liv Ullman in Ingmar Bergman's "Scenes From a Marriage" and Irene Papas in "Z." Ross made her dramatic acting debut in 1974 in the acclaimed Robert Patrick play "Kennedy's Children," where her natural ability and charismatic presence won her widespread critical acclaim.

Born in England but raised in the United States, Ross appeared as a child in two MGM musicals, "Our Gang Follies" and "Presenting Lily Mars," cast in the latter as Judy Garland's younger sister. With Dave Lambert and Jon Hendricks, she formed the acclaimed trio of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, perfecting the style known as "vocalese." As a solo performer, she penned and sang the classic "Twisted," which later became a signature song for both Joni Mitchell and Bette Midler.

In London, Ross established what was to become the "in" West End nightspot, "Annie's Place," which became a haven for both jazz and pop superstars trying out new material. On stage, Ross starred with Vanessa Redgrave in the Tony Richardson U.K. production of "The Threepenny Opera," the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden's "Seven Deadly Sins," directed by Sir Kenneth Macmillan, and the Royal Shakespeare Company's revival of "The Pirates of Penzance."

Following "Kennedy's Children," Ross appeared in the British sitcom "Send in the Girls" and the PBS series "Lassa Fever." Her feature film credits include "The Homecoming," "Straight On 'Til Morning," John Schlesinger's "Yanks" and "Superman III." A consummate professional, Ross spent much of the preproduction time on "Basket Case 2" getting to know her "special" charges as they were created.

"We're a real family," she laughs.

Already a part of "Mountain Family Robinson" and "Wilderness Family," HEATHER RATTRAY becomes a member of an altogether different clan in "Basket Case 2." A graduate of New York's State University in Albany, the auburn-haired, patrician beauty has made something of a career out of playing girls next door, including a recurring role on the CBS daytime drama, "The Guiding Light."

In addition to her past, G-rated film appearances, Rattray co-starred in Warner Bros.' "Shipwreck." On stage, she has appeared in "The Tiger," "Under Milkwood," "Spoon River," "The Big Knife," "A Christmas Carol" and Sam Shepard's "Fool for Love." Rattray performed off-Broadway in the Triangle Theatre Company's "The Hill-Matheson Affair."

Familiar to daytime television audiences as Cyndy London on "One Life to Live" and Juliet Crawford on "Loving," KATHRYN MEISLE makes her feature-film debut in "Basket Case 2" as nosey reporter Marcie Elliott. "I tried to make her a woman with a purpose," says Meisle of the role. "Not a hateful person, just somebody doing her

job." Adds producer Edgar Ievins enthusiastically, "Kathryn confuses the notion that her character is evil."

A Wisconsin native, Meisle served a lengthy apprenticeship in regional theatre, travelling across the United States in productions of Chekhov's "Three Sisters," George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" and "Arms and the Man," Sam Shepard's "Curse of the Starving Class," and Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." Her repeated appearances in stage versions of "Frankenstein" and "Dracula" led her to regard herself as something of a "horror maven."

Meisle appeared off-Broadway in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" for New York's prestigious Lincoln Center. Trained classically at Smith College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the perky blonde actress, who bears more than a passing resemblance to screen siren Theresa Russell, has no regrets about making her debut in a horror film. "I just loved the monster stuff," she confesses.

A series regular from "Channing," "The Young Lawyers" and over 100 guest appearances on such popular shows as "Matlock" and "Murder, She Wrote," JASON EVERS is best known to fright fans as "Herb" Evers, star of the 1959 creature campfest, "The Brain That Wuoldn't Die" -- which just happens to be one of "Basket Case 2" writer-director Frank Henenlotter's favorite films.

"We made that film in the basement of the Henry Hudson Hotel in seven days," Evers recalls. "And I left New York for good after that." Henenlotter succeeded in luring Evers back to the site of his initial notoriety to play the scheming tabloid editor out to expose the Times Square Twins and Granny Ruth in "Basket Case 2."

A noted stage actor, with seven Broadway leads to his credit in plays by Kaufman & Hart under the direction of Jose Quintero, Evers followed "Brain" with more uptown roles in "P.J.," "The Green Berets," and "A Piece of the Action," directed by Sidney Poitier. His additional genre credits include the latter-day classic "The Illustrated Man" and "Escape to the Planet of the Apes."

TED SOREL brings an illustrious lineage to his work in the horror field. The grandson of Universal make-up genius Jack Pierce, the man responsible for Frankenstein, the Wolf Man, and the Mummy, Sorel realized a lifelong ambition to play a monster himself in Stuart Gordon's "From Beyond," in which he portrayed the nefarious, shape-changing Dr. Edward Pretorius. He brings equal relish to his "Basket Case 2" role of a Marlowe-esque private detective.

"I don't get these parts," says Sorel, the son of non-English speaking Greek immigrants. "I have what the business calls an 'upscale' look. A casting director once told me I'd never get work out of a suit, so needless to say I welcomed the chance to look like somebody who really needed a shave."

Sorel's "suit" roles include Robby Benson's music teacher in "Jeremy," (Sorel's screen debut), Dustin Hoffman's defense attorney in Bob Fosse's "Lenny," a vice president of legal affairs in Paddy

Chayefsky's "Network," yet another attorney in James Glickenhau's
"The Exterminator" and an empathetic psychologist in "Without a
Trace."

Moving easily between stage and screen, Sorel appeared on
Broadway in "A Little Family Business," with Angela Lansbury, and
"Sly Fox," directed by Arthur Penn. Among his off-Broadway credits
are Ruth Praver Jhabvala's "A Call From the East" and E.L.
Doctorow's "Drinks Before Dinner," directed by Mike Nichols. He is
currently part of the stock company for the long-running New York
production of "Tamara."

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BASKET CASE 2 QUOTES

"****! The standard for the nineties." -Joe Bob Briggs, THE MOVIE CHANNEL DRIVE-IN THEATRE

"...The most outrageous imagery the Phantom's ever seen onscreen." -Phantom of the Movies, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

"...more disturbing inventiveness and gory absurdist humor than the original...this year's RE-ANIMATOR, unexpectedly weird." -Richard Gehr, THE VILLAGE VOICE

"Jokey, creepy and wonderful...a demented horror treat." -Dennis Dermody, THE PAPER

"...moments of such magnificent outrageousness." -David Edelstein, THE NEW YORK POST

"...hilarious genre spoof..." -VARIETY

"Camp fun." -AUSTIN CHRONICLE

"...successfully blends tongue-in-cheek humor with guts-in-hand horror." -HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"a gross-out, a freak-in and a put-on." -Russell Smith, DALLAS MORNING NEWS

"funny and bizzarre...an instant cult classic." -Russell Smith, DALLAS MORNING NEWS

"It's a crowd-pleaser, with exactly the kind of exaggerated humor that should go over big with midnight audiences." -Mick La Salle, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"one of the weirdest horror movies in quite some time." -Paul Chambers, KRLD RADIO

"Screwy and funny...veers onto strange new terrain." -Chris Seligman, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER



Basket Case 2 (Horror-Color)

A Shapiro Glickenhause Entertainment release of an levins/Henenlotter production. Executive producer, James Glickenhause. Produced by Edgar levins. Written and directed by Frank Henenlotter. Camera (TVC color), Robert M. Baldwin; editor, Kevin Tent; music, Joe Renzetti; sound (Dolby), Paul Bang; production design, Michael Moran; special makeup effects, Gabe Bartalos, original Belial design, Kevin Haney; animatronics supervisor, Kenneth Walker; assistant director, Ted Hope; production manager, Declan Baldwin; casting, Caroline Sinclair. Reviewed at Broadway screening room, N.Y., Feb. 26, 1990. MPAA rating R. Running time: 89 min.

Duane Bradley	Kevin Van Hentenryck
Granny Ruth	Annie Ross
Marcie Elliott	Kathryn Meisle
Susan	Heather Rattray
Editor Lou	Jason Evers

NEW YORK — Belated sequel to the 1982 cult-horror film, "Basket Case 2" is an hilarious genre spoof. With its imaginative makeup effects and cockeyed point-of-view, pic stands a chance of attracting a wider audience than just diehard monster fans.

With only four films under his belt (including "Frankenhooker," shot before "Basket Case 2" but

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Basket Case 2

(Continued from Page 2, Column 3)

yet to be released), Frank Henenlotter shows considerable knowledge and affection for the horror genre. Here he's paying homage to Tod Browning's 1932 classic "Freaks," updated and modernized.

Effective and funny exposition (opening is a riot satirizing clichés such as the evening newscast) fills in the viewer on what happened in the first film: Siamese twins Kevin Van Hentenryck and Belial apprehended on a murder rampage in Manhattan. Separated at the hip, Van Hentenryck is normal-looking except for a hideous scar and Belial is little more than a head with some gruesome flesh attached — carried in a wicker basket by his brother.

Annie Ross, as Granny Ruth, is a crusader for the rights of "unique individuals" (i.e., freaks) and welcomes the brothers into her home in Staten Island.

Weird menagerie of youngsters, mostly crazy variations of the Elephant Man by makeup whiz Gabe Bartalos, are treated very sympathetically at first, but, as in Browning's film (which primarily utilized real sideshow freaks as well as actors Wallace Ford and Roscoe Ates), their potential for scaring the audience is also exploited.

Pic climaxes with Belial's ultra-violent attacks on foes of the freaks, namely tabloid reporter Kathryn Meisle, her shutterbug assistant Matt Mitler and cop Ted Sorel. En route is one of the oddest scenes in recent horror pix, Belial making love to Eve, a similarly grotesque

Siamese twin whose better half, Heather Rattray, is not coincidentally Van Hentenryck's girlfriend. The Siamese twin sex gambit was handled in extremely poor taste in the recent porno video "Joined," but Henenlotter solves that inherent problem with a wild sense of humor.

Van Hentenryck, who's styled to resemble Dobie Gillis on screen, is effective as the self-divided hero and Rattray offers a strange beauty that builds suspense. Wide-eyed Meisle is fun to hate as the exploitative journalist and Jason Evers (of "The Brain That Wouldn't Die") is a fun, nostalgic choice to play the editor.

Casting coup is Annie Ross, the legendary jazz singer of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, who is a lot of fun in the demented granny who goads her freakish charges to fight back.

Tech credits are impressive down the line, demonstrating what an underground filmmaker can do with an ample budget. Lor.

'Basket Case 2'

By JEFF MENFILL

NEW YORK Watching "Basket Case 2" is like having someone tickle your feet while being attacked by an ax murderer. You want to laugh and scream at the same time.

This long-awaited sequel to the 1982 cult hit "Basket Case" successfully blends tongue-in-cheek humor with guts-in-hand horror, which should help "2" double the audience

of "1."

It's the story of Duane and Belial Bradley, two extremely close brothers they were Siamese twins. Their parents had them separated at the dining-room table by two quack doctors, and this is how they became the Bradley bunch.

Duane is relatively normal, but Belial is basically a slimy, mutated

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'Basket Case 2'

continued from page 4 —

head, which explains why he's still single.

Although some might enjoy stuffing a sibling into a wicker basket, Duane does it out of necessity. Besides, Belial loves it in there. He's happy until someone unlucky or stupid enough looks inside the basket. Then, obviously suffering from separation anxiety, he proceeds to rip his face off.

"Basket Case 2" picks up here, where the first movie left off. An injured Duane and Belial are taken to a New York City hospital, a horror in itself. They make a ridiculously easy escape, and are rescued by Granny Ruth (jazz singer Annie Ross) and her granddaughter Susan.

They take the brothers to Granny's New Jersey residence, which turns out to be a haven for other "special" individuals like Belial. His fellow creatures range from Lorenzo, a giant Opera-singing head cheese, to Eve, a draped blob who resembles Belial and with whom Belial falls in love. Very touching, until they actually touch.

Now that Belial has a new family, Duane wants desperately to go off and lead a normal life. He's tired of carrying a basket around and wants to change his wicker ways. But a

BASKET CASE 2	
Shapiro Gluckenshaus Entertainment	
Writer-director	Frank Henenlotter
Director of photography	Robert Baldwin
Special effects make-up	Gabe Bartalos
Editor	Kevin Tent
Music	Joe Renzetti
Producer	Edgar Levine
Color	
Cast:	
Duane	Kevin Van Hentenryk
Granny Ruth	Annie Ross Marcie
Marcie	Kathryn Meisle
Phil	Ted Sorel
Susan	Heather Rattray
Running time — 88 minutes	
MPAA Rating: R	

reporter (Kathryn Meisle) from the tabloid Judge and Jury discovers that Duane and Belial are hiding at Granny Ruth's. This is a threat to all of Ruth's "children," so Ruth sends Belial after their enemies, and the bloodshed begins again.

It's no freak accident that this sequel is so good. Writer-director Frank Henenlotter has provided crisp and witty dialogue. The performances are all very campy, setting the perfect tone for this movie.

The film is spiced with the kind of subtle "inside" stuff that horror fanatics love — for instance, Jason Evers, who plays the editor of the tabloid, starred in "The Brain That Wouldn't Die." In "Basket Case 2," his office has the framed headline "Woman's Severed Head Lives," with a picture of the head from Evers' movie.



Detached: Belial in Frank Henenlotter's *Basket Case 2*

Suture Self

Basket Case 2

Directed and written
by Frank Henenlotter

By Richard Gehr

Cultmeister Frank Henenlotter's infamous *Basket Case* was ground out in 1982 for a measly \$35,000, and his belated sequel twists and squirms with even more disturbing inventiveness and gory absurdist humor than the original. Filmed back-to-back with his somewhat less highly anticipated *Frankenhooker*, the comfortably budgeted *Basket Case 2* could be a stylishly updated *Freaks*, or at least this year's *Re-Animator*; unexpectedly weird narrative twists lend the film a humanist morality almost in spite of its queasy castration-fear underpinning.

When last seen, moody Duane Bradley (Kevin van Hentenryck, inexplicably eight years older and screwier in *BC2*) and Belial, his "small, grotesque monstrosity" of a detached Siamese twin, had plummeted to the sidewalk from a 42nd Street hotel window, and here the new film begins. After a

quick fix-up, they stumble out of a hospital and into the van of a Staten Island family comprised of garishly grotesque "special individuals" cared for by Granny Ruth (former jazz singer Annie Ross), a therapist sympathetic to the plight of unusual physical specimens. "I understand the sadness, I understand the pain," she tells Belial, a squat animatronic figure with protuberances resembling assorted marital aids, "but ripping the faces off people may not be in your best interest."

Insofar as a certain amount of face rippage is de rigueur for the success of productions such as this one, Belial's slasher proclivities are confined to such interlopers as a nosy reporter for a sleazy tabloid called *Judge and Jury* (slaughtered in an apartment decorated with mutant abstract art), the paper's smarmy photographer, a private detective, and an unfortunate old coot who upsets Granny Ruth by displaying fake freaks in his circus sideshow.

Apart from the carnage, however, Henenlotter gets mileage from Duane and Ruth's subtle person-

ality quirks, not to mention the odd personas evinced by the mutants themselves. With these prosthetically malformed family members, Henenlotter pays tribute to everything from *Hellraiser* and *Blue Velvet* to the moon-headed character of recent McDonald's ads. (You might say he has a highly refined commercial sensibility.) Their refuge's mock serenity includes sumptuous junk food feasts served amid bucolic surroundings, with Jolt cola the placed product of choice. The only real misfit, it turns out, is ceaselessly troubled Duane, who wants to run off with Ruth's prim granddaughter, Susan (Heather Rattray). Belial, meanwhile, is doing the nasty with Susan's detached twin, Eve.

While by no means a paragon of dramatic clarity, Duane's confused relationship with Belial is ultimately that of a man out of touch with his personal id demon. Henenlotter's monsters always pack a mixed message (his *Brain Damage* featured a singing, dancing parasite), but with its when-I'm-getting-it-you-can't paradox, the Duane/Belial duality has evolved into one of the strangest cinematic brother acts ever. ■

"*Basket Case 2*." Produced by Edgar Ievins. Presented by Shapiro Glickenhau Entertainment, opening March 2.

'Basket Case 2' weaves slick, sicko spell

By PHANTOM OF THE MOVIES

★★★

BASKET CASE 2: Kevin VanHentenryck, Annie Ross, Kathryn Meisle. Directed by Frank Henenlotter. Running time: 90 minutes. At area theaters. Rated: R.

BELIAL'S BACK AND Granny Ruth's got 'im!

Frank Henenlotter's belated sequel to his 1982 cult fave "Basket Case" sees the Bradley Brothers — "normal" Duane (Kevin VanHentenryck, reprising his original role) and his basket-dwelling badder half, Belial (survive their near-fatal fall from Times Square's Broslin Hotel.

They soon find refuge with eccentric Granny Ruth (Annie Ross), a retired doctor who operates a secret Staten Island "freak" shelter. Out to expose the Bradley Boys are sleazy tabloid editor Lou ("Brain That Wouldn't Die"

alumnus Jason Evers), unscrupulous reporter Marcie (Kathryn Meisle) and private eye Phil ("From Beyond's" Ted Sorel).

Like the original, "Basket Case 2" brims with dark wit, as when Granny Ruth counsels the quick-tempered Belial, "I understand your pain. But ripping the faces off people may not be in your best interest." (1)

Even as Duane struggles mightily to forge a new, separate identity from his deformed twin, love manages to find both Bradleys: Duane becomes enamored of Ruth's granddaughter Susan (Heather Rattray) while Belial tumbles for a mutant miss named Eve. Director Henenlotter's handling of the boys' parallel trysts ranks among the pic's sicko highlights.

While the interior-bound sequel lacks the original's

sleazy Times Square ambience, and most of the flick's secondary freaks are more whimsical than menacing in design (though Frederic the Singing Head has a most memorable moment), "Basket Case 2" finds Belial in fine, feisty form, and the mini-monster takes time out from his newfound romantic pursuits to supply several strongly rendered face-ripping scenes.

After a somewhat leisurely start, "Basket Case 2" picks up the pace in the latter reels, spiraling to a dizzying climax that provides some of the most outrageous imagery the Phantom's ever seen on-screen (we'll say no more here).

"Basket Case 2" stacks up as fun fear fare for "Basket Case" cultists, fright film fans and adventurous viewers of every stripe.



YECCH: Belial, not your usual leading man type.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Basket Case 2' Has Makings of Cult Success

By KEVIN THOMAS
 TIMES STAFF WRITER

B'asket Case 2" is the new Friday midnight show at the Nuart, and there couldn't be a better mating of movie and venue. It has everything it needs to become the cult film that its 1982 predecessor has been: outfagedus dark humor, bizarre horror, driving energy and genuine pathos. It also looks and sounds great, thanks to cinematographer Robert M. Baldwin and composer Joe Renzell, both major contributors to the film's sinister atmosphere.

The new picture can stand on its own, which is more than can be said for its wistful hero Duane (Kevin van Hentenryck) who has been separated surgically from his hideously deformed and homicidal twin Bellal, but from whom he still struggles to free himself emotionally. (Not helping matters for Duane is the fact that they continue to communicate telepathically.) Duane carries the diminutive but surprisingly strong and nimble Bellal everywhere in a large basket.

After Duane and Bellal survive a fall from the roof of a flophouse off Times Square—where they were locked in a bitter knock-down drag-out fight—they are spirited away from the hospital by an elegant middle-aged woman who calls herself Granny Ruth (Annie Ross) and her granddaughter Susan (Heather Rattray). In the attic of one of Staten Island's stateliest Colonial Revival mansions, Granny Ruth hides a group of deformed people she refers to kindly as unique individuals.

Ruth's heart is in the right place, but having given birth to a nine-armed child herself, her mind is crazed. Duane initially feels that he at last has found the perfect haven for Bellal and will now be free, but he has not reckoned with the full measure of Ruth's dementia.

Writer-director Frank Henenlotter might not be able to get away with "Basket Case 2" were his freaks not so outrageously exaggerated. This means that his film is *Grand Guignol* fun rather than truly scary. Henenlotter knows how to build suspense and generate a sense of horror—only to send everything up with a hilarious line. For example, Duane to Bellal: "Ripping the faces off people may not be in your best interests."

Even so, he gets everyone, which includes Kathryn Merte as an amusingly tough reporter for a supermarket tabloid, Jason Evers as her ruthless editor and Ted Ricketts as a canny private eye, to play perfectly straight.

Actually, Ross, a veteran jazz singer as well as skilled actress, and Van Hentenryck handle quite demanding and complex roles with aplomb. However, actors in horror films, even one as distinctive and effective as "Basket Case 2" (rated R) never get the credit they deserve. Just ask Vincent Price.

BASKET CASE 2

Shapiro Olickenhau Entertainment presentation. Executive producer James Olickenhau. Producer Edgar Levine. Writer-director Frank Henenlotter. Camera Robert M. Baldwin. Music Joe Renzell. Special effects makeup Gabe Bartolo. Film editor Kevin Tent. With Kevin Van Hentenryck and Kevin Van Hentenryck.

New Reviews

BASKET CASE II

D: Frank Henenlotter; with Kevin Van Hentenryck, Annie Ross, Katherine Melsie, Heather Rattray.

This sequel to the cult favorite, *Basket Case*, has what it takes to hit with the midnight movie crowd, or the teenaged video circuit, but sadly, it's not the equal of its progenitor. In that first film we were introduced to Duane, and his half-brother (snicker) Bellal. Actually, Bellal and Duane were born as Siamese twins, but when separated, all that was left of Bellal fit in a wicker basket, which Duane now dutifully lugs around. Where the original made the most of low-budget limitations like stark, one-source lighting, minimal music, and acting exempt from the usual standards of good or bad, the sequel is relatively slick: Bellal and Duane come to live with "Granny Ruth," an advocate for "freaks." Most of the movie is taken up in an examination of the weird characters at Granny's house. It's a festival of latex. There's not much here, but what there is, is fun enough and silly enough. Unfortunately, the bizarre characters and camp fun detract from a kind of nice examination of the tensions between the two brothers. Granny Ruth explains it when she says to Bellal, who confesses to feelings of hatred for Duane as well as love, "sure you're angry, but ripping off people's faces may not be in your best interest." Love is never easy. Bellal is perhaps the director's best achievement. The lumpy monster looks out at the world from lonely eyes. When Duane carries him, Bellal's misshapen arms naturally reach out in a kind of embrace. It's all kind of beautiful really. Sad, too, for the brothers have trouble finding love outside of their exclusive relationship. But it is at least a possibility when Duane meets the beautiful Susan at Granny's house and Bellal meets Eve, who lives under a blanket. *Basket Case II* may also have trouble finding someone to love it, but it's goofy enough to make a few friends.

★ ★ (K.M.) Highland 10, Riverside 8, Showplace, Wells Branch









